JOUR 115

BI-MONTHLY

▽THE MAGAZINE FOR BISEXUALS

BI-MONTHLY No.16 **75pence.

TOM ROBINSON SPEAKS:
CLASSIFIED AFFAIRS
POLITICS OF CHILDHOOD
THE LONG ROAD
ANDROGYNY

INFORMATION

PERSONAL ADS

TO REPLY TO A BOX NUMBER PUT YOUR LETTER INTO A STAMPED ENVELOPE WITH the box number marked clearly in the top left hand corner. Put this envelope into another and send to BI-MONTHLY BOX NUMBER REPLIES, Box BM-BI, London WC1 3XX.

Personal ads are free. And they can put you in touch with like-minded people all over the country. Write to: BI-MONTHLY, Box BM-BI, London WC1 3xx.

Bisexual Guy, 29, seeks relationships withother bisexual men and women (30-40), who offer intelligence, sensuality, flexibity, honesty, commitment and freedom. Aberdeen area most useful but contact with Glasgow/Edinburgh tolerated. BOX 16.1

Copenhagen. Danish bisexual male, 28, dark, good-looking, wants friendship with sincere, emancipated, handsome, bisexual English man. Inerests: creativity, writing, art, classical music, travel, exchange of hospitality. Good photo essential. BOX 16.2

Female: Bisexual, vegan, working class, wants to meet female for loving relationship. My interests include animal rights and green politics. You may be similar or different. Somerset. Box 16.3

Bisexual male, 37, muscularish, ex R.N., into growth, singing, martial arts. Seeks younger, perhaps philosophical friend for relationship, humour. share life, with this 'Phil Collins' lookalike. East London. Box 16.4

Married couple (living central London and w/ends Marlow) hope to find girlfriend who will enjoy the their company on a non-possessive no-ties basis. Tel. 01-794-2897 evenings only, ask for Nick.

STOCKPORT/NORTHWEST: Bisexual man, 26, interests reading, walking, music, travel, pubs, seeks other bisexuals (M/F) for friendship; relationship if suited. ALA. Box 16.5

Healthy, loyal, happily married bisexual male, 43, would like to contact others like him with a view to forming sympathetic friendships. Box 16.6

Is anyone interested in forming a bisexual group in the North Staffordshire area? Contact John 0782-289546.

Married Bisexual male seeks understanding friends to write and occasionally meet. Gloucester/anywhere. Box 16.7

Newcastle/Tyneside - Bisexual hippy/biker, male, 26, single, pagan, feminist, animal rights activist. Into rock/blues folk, CND, travel, countryside etc. I'm looking for similar females/males for friendship/love. Any age, looks unimportant. All letters answered. Photo appreciated but not essential. Please write I can't be the only Bi-hippy here!! Box16.8

London; gay-orientated bisexual male, arts interests, 30, tall, slim, wishes to meet similar man Box16.9

Is anyone interested in setting up a bisexual group in Glasgow? If so, please contact GBG, PH7, 340 West Princes St, Glasgow.

The older lesbian and Bisexual women's group is a non-scene group that meets for mealsetc. in London SW1. Telephone 01-979-0695 (6-8pm)

Anyone interested in forming bi-groups in the West Midlands area please write to Alan Taman, 14 WhYle Road, Sutton Coldfield.

COMMERCIAL ADS

Ad Rates

Commercial ads are £1.00 for the 1st 5 lines (25 characters per line) and 25p per line thereafter.

'Achilles Heel' - an anti-sexist magazine produced by pro-feminist men. Details: 79 Pembroke Rd, London E17.

Red Stripe, the condom for safer sex. £1.25/6 from Box BM-BI london WC1 3XX.

M.A.N. the mans anti-sexist newsletter now available 80p or 4.20 for 6 issues from 60 Rhymney Street, Cathays, Cardiff.

The Gay Bookclub offers over 50 titles per year at discount prices. Subscription £5 per year from PO Box 247 London N1 N15 6RW tel 800 5861.

Gay's the Word bookshop is open 7 days a week at 66 Marchmont St. London Wc1.

BISEXUAL GROUPS

BRITAIN

Manchester; meet at Resource Centre, 61 Bloom St. 1st Thursday monthly 8.30-10.00. Contact Paul Owen 236-5986 (4-10pm) 228-3554 (2-4pm).

Edinburgh Bisexual Group meets Thursdays at Lesbian & Gay Community Centre, 58a Broughton St. Details; Kate 031-556-0497

Contacts for bisexuals in Nalgo; tel. Zaidie 01-806-9264 or Dorothy 01-853-4402. (evenings) or write to Box BM-BI, London WC1N 3XX.

Tyneside Bisexual Group meets monthly in Newcastle. Details Simon 0632-615088.

SIGMA support for relationships were one partner is gay or bisexual. Details LLGS 01-837-7324.

Bisexuals and married gay group. Details; Nigel 01-558-5203 (5.30-10pm).

London Bisexual Women's Group meets in peoples houses. Details Lisa 01-318-1179.

Brighton Bisexual Group meets on the first Tuesday of every month 8pm at Brighton Unemployed Centr Prior House, Tilbury Place Brighton. Enclose S.A.E. when writing for details.

SHOUT! A CAMPAIGN GROUP FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MEN AND BISEXUALS. This group was recently formed as a response to growing homophobia in the Establishment (especially the media). Its main aim is actively campaigning in defence of sexual minorities, the group will be visibly active in Glasgow, anyone interested should contact SHOUT! Box No. 19, 240 West Princes St. Glasgow.

The Radical Lesbian/Gay identified bisexual network: PinkDandelion, the Basement, 69 Elm Grove, Brighton BN2 3ET

The London BisexualGroup meets Mondays atthe FallenAngel, 8.30, upstairs 63 Graham St, London N1 Details; David 01-340-5729

Bisexual Women's Drop-in. 1st and3rd Wednesday evenings of each month (contact Lisa 318-1179) at London Friend, 33a Seven Sisters Road, London N7.

ABROAD

United States: Boston Bisexual Women's Network PO Box 1534, Jamaica Plain MA 02130.

San Francisco Bisexual Centre 1757 Hayes St San Francisco CA94117.

Chicago Bi-Ways PO BOX A333 Q Chicago ILL 60690

University of Massachusetts Bisexual Group Amhurst MA 01002.

New York NEW YORK; Bisexual Support Group c/o Bill Himmelhoch 4861 Broadway Apt. 6-S. New York Ny10034 tel212/569-3636.

The Bulletin Board P.O.Box 8556 New York NY 10150.

Netherlands: Landelijk Netwerk Biseksualiteit POBox 5087, NL-1007AB Amsterdam or telephone vroomshoop 05498-44384.

West Germany: Initiative Bisexueller Frauen & Manner c/o E.Kocher, Am Niddertal 31, D-6000 Frankfurt 90.

MISCELLANEOUS

Lesbian and Gay Youth Movement 01-317-9690.

Gay LegalAdvice 01-821-7672. (Mon-Fri 7-10pm).

AIDS helpline - Terrence Higgins Trust 01-833-2971 (7-10 pm).

Lesbian Line 01-251-6911

London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard 01-837-7324.

Leeds AIDS helpline Mondays& Thursdays 7-9pm (0532)444209.

Lesbian & Gay Youthline - 031-228-4531 Mon, Wed 7-10 pm Sun, afternoon

To find out how you could benefit from advertising in this space phone 01-737-5763.

BI-MONTHLY
▽THE MAGAZINE FOR BISEXUALS

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THIS ISSUE

Produced by: Tom Brooks (Editor) Martin, Philip Gatter, Rachel O'Connor.
Distribution & Subscriptions; Chris Claxton-Stephens, Andreas Reda.
Thanks to; David Burkle, David Smith, Zaidie, The London Bisexual Group, The Fallen Angel.
Cover; 'Gloria Swanson' (1924) by Edward Steichen Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Published By Biotic Publications
Box BM-BI London WC1N 3XX.
Tel 01-737-5763/340 5729/7370895
Printed by CLEARAPRINT LONDON SW9

Bi-Action

A new group has been set up to campaign for recognition of Bisexuality, and to organise the Bisexual movement. Provisionally called the Bi-action meeting, it is convened once a month at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre.

Springing out of the conference held earlier this year, the group answers a need to organise away from the distractions of the Monday nights at the Fallen Angel.

The first aim has been to open u up lines of communication between those who have traditionally taken responsibility in the group and new members. Also of vital importance is the need to apply for local authority grants of some sort, following the demise of the GLC. It seems possible that we may obtain the use of a Community Services Volunteer, but we urgently need office space to house the groups files and equipment.

Other topics discussed have been the role of women, progress on the magazine, liaison with other gay organisations and the organisation of Monday night meetings.

For further information contact David on 01-340-5729, or write to Box BM-BI, LondonWC1 3XX.

SCOTTISH YOUTHLINE RELAUNCH

Lesbian and Gay Youthline has been set up specially for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people. It is being run by young people who are known to be pro-bisexual (unlike those running the Lesbian & Gay Youth Movement's L & G Youthline).

The chance to talk to other young people is an important one, especially as 'adult' run Switchboards often treat young people with contempt, patronise them, or just ignore them.

For: example:- 'Phone back when you're older!'

'Are you sure you're gay? Do you look at men's crotches?'

The new number is:-
031- 228 4531
The times are Wed. 7 - 10 pm
Fri. 7- 10 pm
& Sun. afternoon

Women & Aids

The Terrence Higgins Trust has issued a leaflet on 'Women and Aids'. This reflects growing concern at the spread of the virus outside the gay male population.

From the beginning, the Trust has made it clear that Aids is a threat to the entire population; in some african countries such as Uganda, up to 10% of th people are infected.

Recent surveys, typically that o of the American armed forces, have shown women to be as easily prone to infection as men.

To obtain the leaflet contact th the Trust at; BM AIDS, London WC1 3XX, enclosing an S.A.E.

Following the success of this years Conference, tentative steps are being taken to organise next years National Bisexual Conference which will probably be held in Edinburgh.

It is hoped that following an introductory session a group of workshops on massage, personal development, political action, and drama willtake place.

Anyone interested in helping wit with the conference should contact he group via the BM-Bi mailbox.

Edinburgh

The Edinburgh Bisexual Group is starting Britain's first-ever bisexual helpline. The proposed launch date is January 8. The number is likely to be 031- 557 3620 operating on Thursday evenings from 8pm.

We'll let you know the full details in the next issue.

Radio

NETWORK 21, a new gay radio station, has started broadcasting in the London area. Listeners can tune in on Friday and Saturday evenings, between 8PM-3AM. The frequency is 89.9 FM.

The programmes so far are an iconoclastic mixture of gay disco music, obscure album favourites, asian pop music and russian folk song. The evenings tend to be overseen by a mad french astrologer, Madame Fatale, who is given to doling out bilingual horoscopes at regular intervals.

Prestel

Following agreement at a recent Bisexual Action Meeting, the London Bisexual Group has now join joined British Telecoms Prestel facility. The Group will have a page on Prestel, and a mail box through which Prestel users can make contact. Matt Milne, the custodian of the recently purchased Prestel equipment, will be able to contact all enquirers via mail and prestel, once the mailbox has been cleared.

This development emerged from a highly successful Monday night meeting, at which Rachel O'Connor demonstrated how, through a simple computer link-up between a computer and a television and a telephone, and payment of the appropriate BT fee, we will be able to contact and make ourselves known to computer buffs throughout the country.

Although Prestel is not widely used at the moment, it has already reserved several channels, or 'closed user groups' for the gay population, and will undoubtedly spread into millions of homes over the next few years.

Contact Matt on 853 4402.

Obituary

Dr. Charlotte Wolff, whose biography of pioneer sexologist MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD was published earlier this year, died recently at the age of 84.

A german born psychiatrist and life long campaigner for sexual freedom, Charlotte was also the author of 'BISEXUALITY'. This paperback remains the only serious book on the subject available in Britain.

Wolff qualified as a doctor in Berlin in 1928, but fled to Paris in 1933 after the Nazis took control of Germany.

Her portrait of Hirschfeld, although not entirely satisfactory, contained much useful material about feminists and feminism in the early years of this century.

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Lesbian and Gay Youth Movement

Earlier this year the Lesbian and Gay Youth Movement suffered a largely self-destructive purge. Three Working Group members were 'asked to leave'.

The reasons for the expulsion vary depending on which of the new ruling elite you talk to. The official party line, as sent out in a mailing to all members, was that two of the three are 'sexist'.

This clearly refers to the case of the bisexual man who had heterosexual pornography. The second 'sexist' man's guilt seems to lie in his being a friend of the bisexual. The third man was not officially declared 'sexist' as one of the Working Group still fancied him.

The real reasons involved personal/political elements, a lust for power, and two different concepts of what LGYM was all about. The major difference was between those who wanted to open up LGYM and its politics, and those who wanted to take it back to what it used to be, a small group that gets together to discuss the most Right On issues, eg tokenistic anti-racism, anti-sexism, etc. The Right On element won!

The message for BISEXUAL MALES from LGYM seems to be 'Yeh, it's OK for you to be bisexual, if you have to be, as long as you don't fantasise about, or have sex with women'. The argument, just one of their many politically pure, Right On, ones, seems to be that men have power over women, therefore a heterosexual relationship is power-based, and not valid. The same gross over simplification has been used against pedofile relationships, though as LGYM tries to retain an outwardly 'radical' appearance, they still (hypocritically) support these in theory.

Surprisingly LGYM has survived the 'cuts' made to the Working Group, but the services it provides are acting at a reduced level, in particular the magazine has stopped appearing regularly and the events have been poorly advertised and attended. There were only eleven on this year's Summer Camp. More events are promised, for next year, a couple in Nottingham, and one in Glasgow. There's also a weekly drop-in in North London, and a pedofile section is supposed to have been set up.

At this year's late, late Spring Festival, held in October, the Charter was revised. It will be interesting to see if the present Working Group's bitter dislike of the concept of bisexuality will be reflected in this, or in the next issue of the magazine.

Courtcase

Transsexual Mark Rees recently lost his long battle at the European Court of Human Rights to have his birth certificate reissued declaring him male.

Mr. Rees was born female but always showed female characteristics. He recieved surgical treatment in 1974, and a course of hormones has completed his gender conversion.

His passport and driving licence show his male status, but his birth certificate cannot be changed. As this bars him from marrying a woman, he began proceedings against the British Government at Strasbourg in 1979.

But in judgement, Britain was not found guilty of violating the European Human Rights Convention, regarding his right to marry.

The court however called on all european countries to study the situation of transsexuals to ensure they do not suffer social disadvantage.

High Camp

A small delegation from the London Bisexual Group attended this years Alternative Miss World ceremony, held at the Brixton Academy.

In the company of such 'celebrities' as Koo Stark and Andrew Logan, a bemused crowd witnessed an outrageous display of camp. Contestants included a gentleman clad in nothing but a pink bow tied to his willy (!) and the victorious Miss National Geographic, who sported a giant papier mache volcano.

Although we were heavily outnumbered by Channel Four camera crews, it remains to be seen whether television will serve this media-event up for the nations pleasure.

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The Politics of Childhood

THIS ARTICLE, BY AN ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTOR, CALLS FOR A DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS OF CONTRIBUTORS ARE ENTIRELY THEIR OWN, AND NOT THOSE OF ANYBODY ELSE

Today's lesbian and gay movement, on the whole vehmently opposes pedofilia and refuses to discuss it. It accepts without question the line produced by straight society that all sex between adults and children is 'child sexual abuse', an assault on the child. In this article I want to face the prejudice of many within the lesbian and gay community, and to start to destroy many of the myths about pedofilia and about childhood. Pedofilia is clearly not just a gay male issue. There are heterosexual, bisexual and gay pedofiles, male and female. I'm writing as a male who is bisexual and pedofile.

PEDOFILIA AND CHILDHOOD ARE POLITICAL ISSUES

Our society is built on the family unit, whose values are held as sacred. The family unit gives men power over women and adults power over children. In the past homosexuality, women's roles and the roles of children, were made a question of morals, and not a question of politics, so that debate on these subjects could be quashed (or censored). By making pedofilia and child sexuality taboo subjects, no discussion at all is allowed. If you can't discuss something, then you can't think about it, or change it. Nowadays feminism and lesbian and gay rights have begun to enter the party political arena, but only in a form that does not pose a threat to the present power imbalances upheld by the family unit.

A THREAT TO TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES

The enemies of lesbian and gay groups tell us that homosexuality threatens the family unit (that sturdy building block, on which society is based). They are right! Our enemies are often more aware of the revolutionary potential of our politics than we are!

The politics of the liberation of young people are highly censored, as YOUTH LIBERATION would involve huge changes to society. It is to the threat of such changes that the most emotive and deeply ingrained prejudices are wheeled out. Prejudice is something we're all very aware of. Prejudice is not based on reason, but on conditioned emotions. Look at anti-gay feelings. People are taught to hate and fear homosexuality. This is taken to the extreme with pedofilia, children's sexuality, (and other issues concerning children).

THE INVENTION OF CHILDHOOD, AND THE MYTH OF CHILDHOOD

I've taken the phrase the 'myth of childhood' from Shulamith Firestone's book *The dialectic of sex. A case for feminist revolution.* In this book she attacks the oppressive concepts of childhood in the chapter *Down with Childhood*, and argues that the oppression of women and children is shared, so that 'women's liberation cannot happen without the liberation of children'. Women are oppressed because of their child-bearing and rearing role. Children are defined in relation to this role, and formed by it. When they become adults they inflict these roles on others.

She puts a historical perspective on the invention of childhood. This is an important and useful part of the development of political ideas. In the Middle Ages there was no such thing as childhood. Children were miniature adults, moving into their outlined social position. Families were more about 'blood-lines', than social units.

Children had no special vocabulary to describe them. (Words are a very important form of making prejudice a part of society, eg 'homosexuality' was an invention to set us apart and repress us. The word 'childhood' is another such invention).

Children's toys did not appear until 1600, for those below 3 or 4 years. By the late 1800's special childen's games were introduced. Until then the games were shared by all age groups. Childhood soon became institutionalised in schools. Childhood was an abstract concept, and the modern school the institution that built it into reality. There was the first talk of the weakness and innocence of childhood, and children were put on a pedestal; just as 'femininity' had been put on such a pedestal. 'Discipline' was the real key word, an instrument of moral and spiritual improvement. Segragation of young people made 'childhood' a more clearly defined concept.

The idea of the 'family', today's nuclear family, is also a relatively modern concept. Society was broken down into small, self-centred units. The product of that unit, the reason for its maintenance, is the child.

The interrelated myths of femininity and childhood reached a peak in the Victorian era, and brought a reaction from women, leading to the pseudo-emancipation of women, and the pseudo-emancipation of children. Women had the vote, and children were freed from the ugly toils of child labour. Big deal! Now, schooling is compulsory. If school doesn't get you, then the social-workers will!

From being just young people, children have come to be regarded as a race apart. Psychologists follow social trends, and have come up with theories to set young people apart; they invented 'child psychology'. (and more recently 'adolescence'). Don't forget that it was the medical profession that declared homosexuality to be an illness, and that children showing 'homosexual tendancies' are still forced to see psychiatrists.

The myth of childhood has reached new heights. Capitalism has developed industries to build and exploit the myth of femininity, and now whole industries are built on 'childhood' and 'childcare'.

HAPPY, INNOCENT AND FREE ?

There's the myth of childhood happiness. Adults sentimentalise childhood because they're out of touch with the reality of childrens' lives. What is childhood *really* like? Experience tells me that childhood does not provide 'the best days of your life'. Children are not free. The family home and schools make unpleasant prisons. Having no money further ensures that children have virtually no say over their own lives.

DOWN WITH CHILDHOOD! DOWN WITH SCHOOL!

The role of school in our capitalist society is to produce a relatively small number of highly educated experts to do the brain work, and a large number of less well educated people to do the donkey work. School is also required to make sure people are taught not to think. The examination system aims for parrot-fashion conformity. The pressure to conform comes from the young people too, as they fiercely mimic the prejudices shown by parents, and the media. The adults running schools know the importance of the 'divide and rule' philosophy and help set up a hierarchial power structure, in which certain pupils have more privileges and power.

DOWN WITH CHILDHOOD! DOWN WITH THE FAMILY!

The number of traditional family units is on the decline, as the number of single parent families increase. However the traditional family values remain. Men still have the power and privileges. Women are still the child-bearers and rearers, and the family still plays its part in the production and moulding of children. Sexual roles and prejudices are taught from a young age, and the child remains relatively powerless for many years. The child is treated as a possession of the parents. THE PED THREAT particularly affects this parental ownership, but the law and social values ensure that it is virtually impossible for a child to chose with whom he or she lives.

We're sexual from the day we're born. The myth is spread that sexuality comes with puberty. Most people can remember that this is not true. Children are sexually repressed, probably in order to give society the time to attempt to channel the natural wide-ranging human sexuality into narrow socially acceptable forms. What society fears most is sexual freedom, because this would lead to the breakdown of the values holding together the family unit.

It's silly to put adult values to CHILD SEXUALITY, as on the whole *adults are screwed up about sex.* A boy may enjoy being touched, cuddled, wanked, by an older male friend, and get turned on when they're in bed together. But it doesn't mean that the boy has to define himself as gay, or has to define his friendship as a 'relationship'. To the boy it feels natural, the affection and the closeness is nice. The boy has a chance to express his more loving side, which society, with its emphasis on macho male aggression and violence, does not encourage. This boy is more liberated than most adults. In a liberated society there would be no sexual labels, (to set certain sexualities apart), and the taboos of touching and sex would disappear. With sexual freedom, sex itself would be no big deal any more, and people could just be themselves.

People are often oppressed in the name of 'protection'; children must be protected, their innocence and simplicity maintained. Information about pleasureable sexual feelings is denied young people. THE PED THREAT is to the innocence/ignorance of young people. Again we can learn from our enemies, who fear that gay and lesbian pedofiles will 'corrupt' the children. They know that it is possible to influence someone's sexuality, after all this is what they try to do on a massive scale.

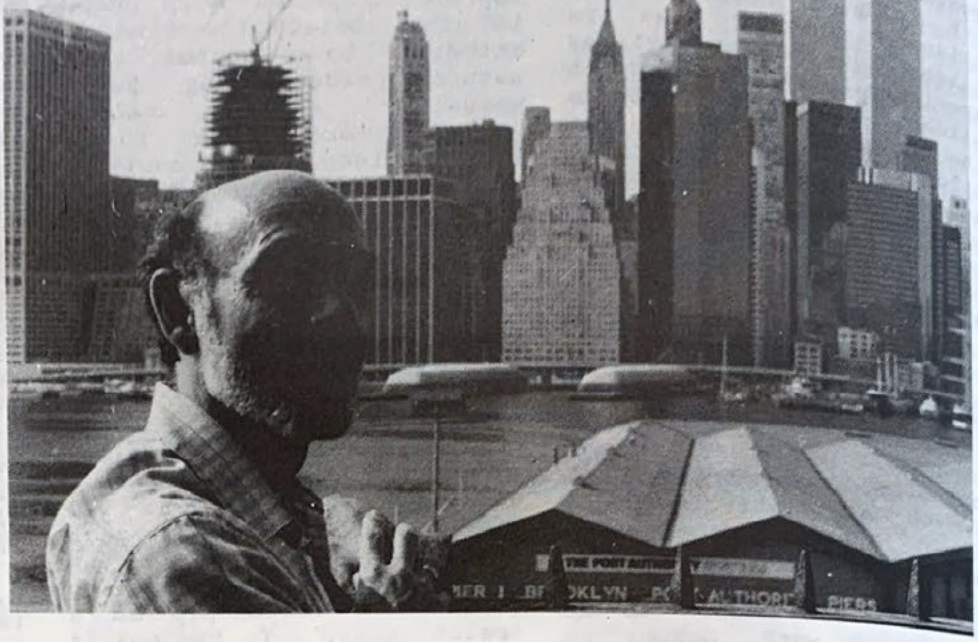
The liberation of all young people and sexual liberation are not impossible dreams! There are already young people who achieve a degree of freedom. And despite the pressures from society, and the strict enforcement of moral standards by the police, the courts and the social services, successful pedofile relationships do exist. Despite the power differences between adults and children there are non power-based pedofile relationships, perhaps in the same way there are non exploitative heterosexual relationships. In many cases the pedofile relationship provides the young person with the only relationship with an adult they will ever have which is not power-based. Most child sex abuse is by heterosexual men within the family, as it is parents who have the greatest power over children. *It is within the family and at schools that the abuse of children really takes place!*

Pedofilia raises many important issues for the lesbian and gay community. Should people of all ages be free to experience lesbian and gay desire/sexuality/sex, and to be free from homophobic education? Are we to campaign only for limited forms of sexuality, and not for pedofilia? Are we to campaign for the lowering of the age of consent to sixteen, and thus deny young people the right to have sex? The age of consent should be abolished! Young people should have the information and power to choose how to enjoy their own sexuality. *There should be no lower age limit on lesbian and gay liberation!*

Youth Liberation, Women's Liberation and Sexual Liberation are all inextricably linked. (One cannot happen without the others). We have to recognize the reason for the oppression of all three:- the maintainance of the family unit. Without Youth Liberation any politics which say they are the politics of liberation are meaningless. It is through the process of childhood, ie. the oppression of children, that the oppression of women, and of homosexuality is made possible. Faced with the reason for our oppression, and knowing the means by which it is achieved *we must fight against such oppression!*

New York New York

BY PHILIP GATTER


THE PORT AUTHORITY
ER 1 BR OKLYN PO AUTHORI PIERS

What first struck me about the Lesbian and Gay Service Center, an unremarkable redbrick building on west thirteenth street, was the policeman on the door. What did this forebode? Greatly to my surprise, and relief, I was politely directed to the meeting of the New York Bisexual Support Group.

We often talk of bisexuality being marginalized. Well here it was quite tangible: the bisexuals in a small room at the back, separated from the hi-energy disco by a thin wall. The point was raised at the meeting "where do we find refuge next?". (I think, in terms of venue, we are relatively fortuate in London).

Of course, I was interested in how our two groups compared. I had expected a large, perhaps formidable gathering (such things are not uncommon in New York), but found instead a relatively small (about fifteen members), intimate group, about half-and-half men and women, which has existed for a couple of years. The accent is definitely on support, and the meeting I attended was nearer related to our personal group meetings than to our speaker meetings. We discussed rejection, each member recounting personal experiences and being encouraged by the group leader to think out ways of respoonding to it in future. The therapeutic flavour of the session was for me the greatest contrast with London; the purpose of discussing rejection was to turn it on its head and make people feel better about themselves. In a sense I felt that discussion was too strongly directed, but perhaps we could learn from this approach. I don't want to generalize, but I do think we find it too easy to discuss bisexuality in an abstract, theoretical way (politics &c.), and too difficult to talk openly about personal experience. Or at least we relegate these concerns to separate meetings.

But, the heavy stuff over, I enjoyed an excellent meal at a nearby Chinese vegetarian restaurant, and had the chance to talk more informally. The people I met were both friendly and interested to learn what we were doing in London, and I promised to send a copy of Bi-monthly on returning. Friendliness is the strongest impression of the evening I retain; everyone was keen to meet again and show me around. It was a pity I had only five days.

Ther followed a guided tour of Greenwich Village: ice cream, Christopher Street, bookshops, a hustlers' bar ("You've got to see one of these while you're in New York"). Then a drive up to the north end of Manhattan with my host, the founder of the New Yo group, artist and psychotherapist Bill Himelhoch (pictured).

For the next few days I was treated to an alternative tour of the city, which kept me fairly well stupefied. On one occasion, Bill borrowed a car to drive us over to Brooklyn. As we left the parking lot he said "I think I should tell you I don't like driving in cities". I would never ha have guessed.

But for Bill's generosity, I would not have been able to stay in New York. I hope that I, and the London group in general, will be able to return the hospitality in kind, should someone cross the Atlantic in the opposite direction

STOP PRESS * MORE INFORMATION *

Al and Pat announce the birth of Rowan Megan Whitehead, at home on Tuesday, 18th November. Address from Box BM/BI.

Married couple, 25, husband bisexual, seek bisexual man 20-35 for faithful, loving, long-term relationship. Send photo and honest letter for same. (Lancs) Box 16.10

Happily married bisexual couple would welcome contact from other couples or singles with hopes of forming lasting loving friendships. Sense of humour will help ! (Somerset). Box 16.11

Womens Space

In the wake of the Fourth National Bisexual Conference Pat White offers some personal thoughts on "womyn's space" from his retreat in South Wales.

As a man I'm writing this because I'm tired of men bitching about Wimmin's need for time and space apart from men; often it's the same men who have heard the reasons and not absorbed them. Those men may consider this a refresher course - from a man this time - and those genuinely in the dark may find it helpful.

Basically, the attitude that won't accept wimmin's need for separate space - especially after repeated explanation - is a cause for need. Wimmin's separate space has been a backbone of feminism; in c.r. groups, discussion, political, support and other groups and has led to a lot of feminist theory and analysis that would probably never have developed from mixed groups.

In a separate space, wimmin can discuss and experience issues and events, without having to cope with male reaction. Wimmin can nurture each other for a change and support each other in problems and struggle, experience the solidarity of othe wimmin, gain new confidence, share the painful daily experiences of sexism and together develop mew strategies and concepts.

Many wimmin find it hard to express themselves in mixed groups, where men are generally dominant, either in numbers or articulation, and which are often patriarchal in structure and style. The unresolved guilt of men and the not-worked-out politics of most men have to be dealt with by wimmin, who are often forced into the traditional nurturing roles they are trying to leave behind: most men - regardless of sexuality - still look to wimmin to have their emotional needs met.

There are other reasons, less obvious - and perhaps too complex for some minds - which could be mentioned. There is one last reason, which should be clear to anyone, a reason more and more wimmin want to work with wimmin only; they are completely pissed off with men, and until men get their act together, refuse to put any more energy into men, at least in groups.

To any man still unclear about wimmin's need for separateness; it is time more men started working out their sexism, preferably in men's groups committed to anti-sexism and other prejudices. Some day, we, as men, may have something to offer in mixed groups, that we didn't take from wimmin.

another correspondent writes:

I object to women-only meetings at the London Bisexual Group. I feel that they go against the grain of all that the LBG has achieved, not least its attempt to transcend the gender war, and lower the defining barriers between the sexes.

The reason that London Bisexual Group is so much better than other gay groups is precisely the mixture of men women and transsexuals. Bisexual men identify with the women's outlook on the world and are keen to emphasise their opposition to sexism.Bisexual women welcome the opportunity to mingle with men who are non-sexist.

In the meeting of the Bisexual Action Group at which it was first announced that there would be single gender evenings of the London group, I voiced one further objection.

It was that transvestites and transsexuals would not be welcome at the women-only meeting and would certainly not wish to attend a men- only meeting, since they identify as women.

This brought a torrent of invective down on my head. It was clear that there was a good deal of hostility to transsexuals fromthe feminists.They are not accepted by the women as women.

Oddly enough, I do still agree with the need for some women-only space.(Don't forget we already have a seperate women-only group that meets at Friend in the Holloway Rd).Time and time again I have seen the women unable to brach the barrage of male voices at our meetings.

But as far as I am concerned, the presence of transvestites and transsexuals at the London Bisexual Group is an integral part of its existence. Over the years several of these people have contributed a great deal of energy in the form of talks,organisation, making banners,the magazine etc. So it is surely wrong that they should be excluded in this way.

It is not doing justice to the issue of Women's space to simply agree to it without discussion.It is plain that we all have a long way to go,and that this issue is still unresolved.

I am committed to women's space of some sort,but not without discussion first.I feel a good deal of the male support for women's space is hypocritical - socialist and anti-sexist men seem desperately worried about not appearing 'ideologically sound' or 'right on' enough .

Feminist books are takenas holy writ(SEE THIS MONTHS LETTER ON ANDROGYNY P19);it is taken for granted that men are the enemy, as Germaine Greer once thought she had discovered.

Men are terrified of anything that would offend the women, as if feminism was some avenging goddess to be appeased at all costs.

London
Lesbian & Gay Switchboard
01·837·7324
24 HOUR INFORMATION & ADVICE FOR LESBIANS & GAY MEN

SPARE ROOM?
Hundreds of lesbians and gay men are looking for accommodation in London. Can you help?
London
Lesbian & Gay Switchboard
01·837·7324
24 HOUR INFORMATION & ADVICE FOR LESBIANS & GAY MEN
92

Lonely Hearts and Contact Ads

CONTACT ADS ARE A GOOD WAY TO MEET OTHER BISEXUALS, WRITES TOM BROOKS; BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT YOUR GOALS, WHILE FORGETTING THE STIGMA THAT HAS ATTACHED TO 'LONELY HEARTS' ADS IN THE PAST.

I can only write from my own experiences in the last two years, but I think they might contain the germ of a useful idea for other bisexual people.

There should be no need to define Contact Advertisements - everyone's seen the back pages of Time Out:

'Bisexual? Male? Non-camp?(21+) Then snap! Box 341...'

'Bi-girl, Islington, 26, seeks similar for warm friendship. Box 292...'

and you probably read them regularily, even if only to enter the realms of fantasy!

So why take it a step further and attempt to meet people through the ads? Because, particularily for people who attend the Bi-Group in London, it is easy to forget the isolation of bisexuals in the community. Although there are millions of us, we do not have the facilities or social structures which even the gay community possesses. Gays now have their own shops, clubs, pubs and weekly newspapers, but bisexual people may not necessarily feel comfortable in the them.

So how do you meet people, if, like me, most of your friends are straight, and the gay world does not seem appropriate?

Contact ads was the idea I hit upon. While on the face of it, the purpose of these ads cannot be to establish a bisexual community, it is nonetheless a very direct way of meeting people. To put it bluntly, your cards are on the table, you are seeking a lover. In one sense, this saves a great deal of time; when you meet your contact in person or write in you both know exactly why, which puts you on an equal footing.

On the other hand, this creates a lot of pressure; the process can be akin to treating people as objects to consume or instantly reject. Mostly the pressure comes from the stigma of being a lonely heart. In this society it is hard to say you are lonely, and you are branding yourself as a social failure by doing so. Why should this be? People who use the ads are not failures but often have perfectly good reasons to advertise.

In my case, it was because I had moved town and was still in the process of coming out. Other people may have just ended a relationship and be at a loose end, or dread the risk of Aids incurred through casual pickups. Or they may be constrained by the nature of their job, such as the gay priest I met on one date.

Many people value the discretion afforded by the ads. Bisexual people may wish to maintain straight relationships, but want to explore same-sex relationships concurrently. Also the fact that you may meet your contact only once helps to overcome the fear of rejection which inhibits us all.

Many people, while they are bisexual, do not wish to label themselves publicly as such, but would rather seek the privacy of the advertising columns, ironic as this may sound. In advertising, it is quite common for you not to have to include your name or address; for a fee you are given a box number. Furthermore, any responses will come in an anonymous envelope, and you don't even have to reply to them.

I decided, at first, to write in to ads rather than place one myself After all, just one weeks ad in Time Out will cost at least £25. But I soon discovered the major drawbacks of this approach. If there is no reply, a whole month will have been wasted. And, in the end, writing endless letters to ads proved to be a wearing process , seeming to cost a fortune in postage stamps

But in placing an ad myself I faced a major hurdle, apart from the problem of finance. I suddenly realised I would have to define myself, and in 25 words at that! Who was I? And more importantly, what did I want? The ad would have to be original, yet not smart-alecky, sexy but not crude, concise but also warm. The answer I came up with was something like as follows;

'BISEXUAL MAN, 29, North London, not unattractive, highbrow interests but fun, seeks similar. Photograph would oblige. Box...'

The response to an ad will depend on how attractively it is worded, and also on the age specified - older people are more reluctant to participate.

My first ad got 7 replies, and after a little literary polishing my third ad got 40 replies. These arrive in a large plain envelope two weeks after your appearance in the public lists.

They are fascinating reading. Of course it was impossible to meet everyone, so once read I sorted them in to piles - returning the unsuitable letters to their originators with a brief note of apology.

The letters were surprisingly personal and long. Nearly all contained photographs.

You could tell a lot about them without even opening the envelopes. The letters in cheap stationery came from very young people, the letters in crisp long envelopes were formal and polite. All exposed the same hunger for companionship, whether cheerful or gloomy. Some were plainly obsessed with the nuts and bolts of sexuality (I remember a twelve page hymn to the joys of anal intercourse from a gentleman in South London) while others were more reticent and alluring.

The photographs were nearly always a disaster area, either so impossibly good-looking I did not dare to meet the person concerned, or so hideous as to be completely off-putting. Those who did not include a photograph went to the top of my pile.

Alas, few people are photogenic, and photo-me booths are cruel truth tellers. I think if I were writing to an ad I would not now enclose a photograph - none of the letters where I had done so were sucessful.

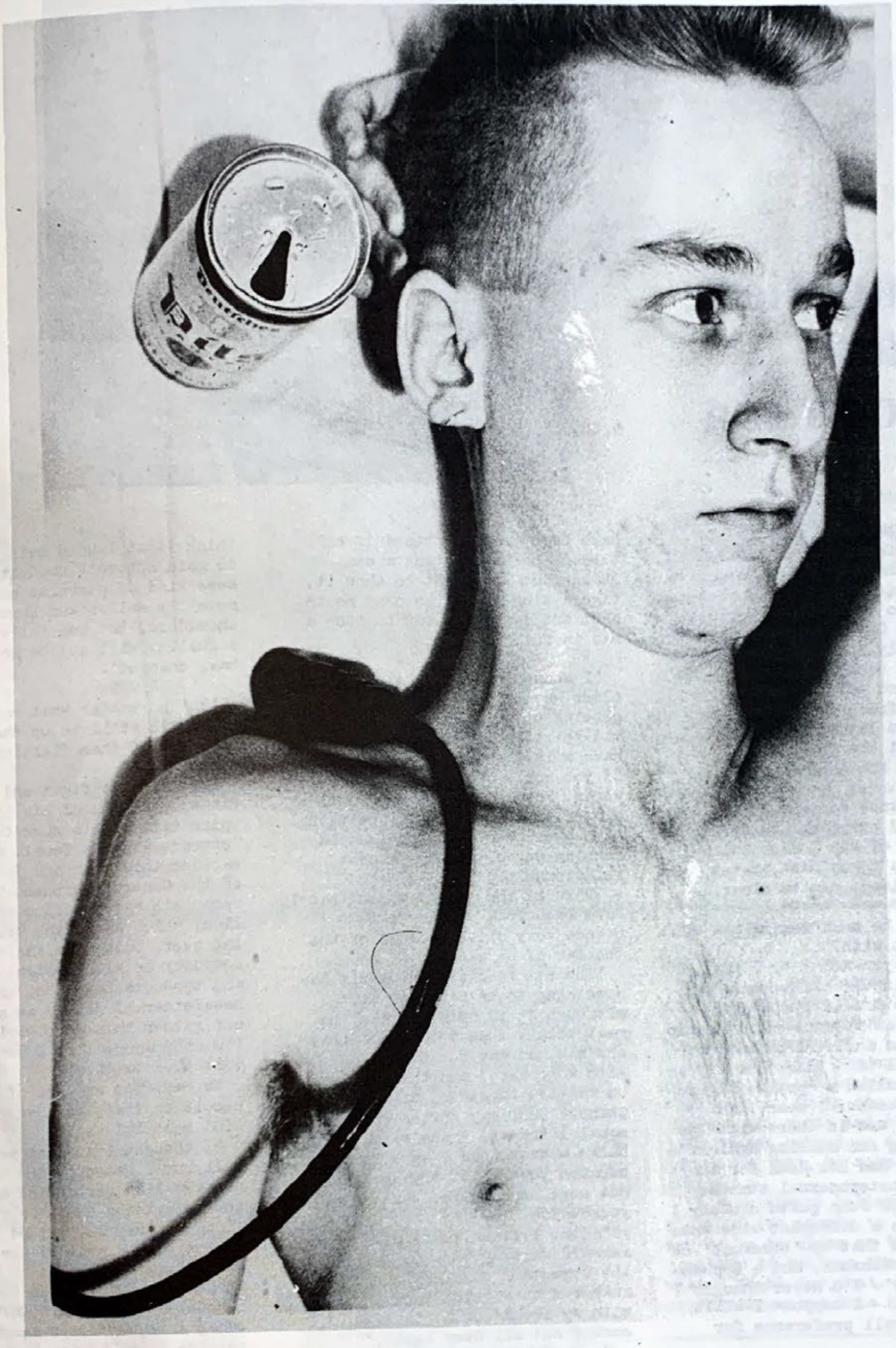
In the next stage, it is important to choose a good place to meet. My home did not seem right somehow, and I have never liked public houses. Indeed, a surprising number of people do not drink. In the end I chose to meet people in the restaurant of the National Gallery at lunchtime, if it was not too crowded.

On meeting my contacts for the first time, I realised I had some illusions to dispel. I suppose, like so many people, I had been waiting for someone on a white charger to come and rescue me! But I soon found out, that if anyone was going to make a recue attempt, it would be me. My self-confidence sustained a considerable boost. Thought you were nervous? The other person is always more nervous/uncertain/chain-smoking/gauche than you are!

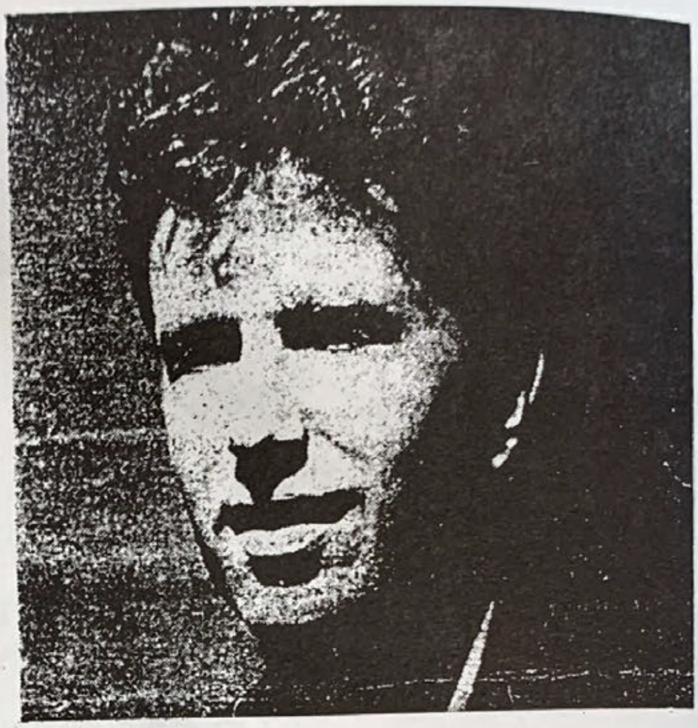
Another surprise, and perhaps the biggest advantage of this method of meeting people, is the great range of people you will meet, I met an air-steward, a priest, a film-scriptwriter and many others.

It would be true to say that I met most of these people only once, but it was a great time of learning about other people and it seemed to act as a catalyst on the rest of my life. At last I had stopped moaning to my lady friends about not having a boyfriend and got on with it !!!

Photograph by Todd Arnold 1986.



Interview: Tom Robinson



TOM ROBINSON HAS BEEN ONE OF BRITAINS HOME-PRODUCED GAY HEROES for more than a decade. An active campaigner, articulate speaker and the man who brought the world Glad to Be Gay, he has ceaselessly and publicly argued in vociferous support of equal rights for lesbians and gay men.

But now, fresh from finishing work on his latest album, he talks about how for him the times they are a changing.

'We all know men who to all intents and purposes are straight. Regardless of who I sleep with I identify as a gay man',states Tom.

Well at least that's clear.

Or is it?

What can he mean'regardless of who I sleep with?'

'What do you mean?.', I ask.

'it's a little bit awkward because at the moment I'm having quite a... an intense relationship with a woman and... I'm just not sure how all this places me vis-a-vis being called a 'public figure' on the gay scene. I mean, ten years ago I was in there with the rest ranting and railing against David Bowie and Lou Reed for their born-again heterosexual stance. Knowing Elton John quite closely I came to have a different view when he announced that by 'bisexual' he he'd meant bisexual, not a euphemism for 'gay'. I'd never thought I was bisexual - I suppose I still have an overall preference for men...'

I felt my face flush. This is how straights must feel when their faggot friend comes out. I would have been less surprised if he'd told me he was wanting a sex change.But I try not to show it, take a slug of tea,keep my mouth shut and determine not to stop a man in full flow.

STABILITY

'I suppose now as I'm getting older -well of course we're all getting older - but yes, in one's mid-thirties it would be nice to have a little emotional stability, if you could quote those exact words. For instance,I am much closer to all my family now than I have ever been.Although that has nothing to do with my present relationship.

'This is the second woman that I have been fond of and we have become very close because of who the two of us are.

'The sex is different,butit has something to be said for it, although it is nothing like the real thing. I mean the fact that she has had gay relationships with womenalso, and that we'd go on rallies together, or watch the Channel Four gay movies (with equal interest) - she's more of a badge wearer than I am - it helps because you're not trying to act out some macho role, just enjoying yourselves.

..'After fifteen years of feeling awkward walking with my lover in the street, i now feel the same awkwardness walking hand in hand with my lover now.It is like coming out all over again.'

Some of his friends, he says, haven't adapted too well to his new 'particular friend'.

'A few people are going to think that I used being gay to gain notorety,used it for some kind of perverse career move',he smiles and shrugs his shoulders,'but hopefully my sexuality will not be seen to have changed'.

FIGHT

'But no matter what happens to me I will still be up there with the rest of them fighting for the cause,'

Part of that fight and one that takes up achunk of his limited spare time is his work for the Terrence Higgins Trust. He joined earlier this year and is a member of the General Purposes Group, responsible for office administration, which keeps the Trust ticking over. Using his Macintosh home computer he also designs writes an and typesets page 3 of the THT newsletter.'I joined as a volunteer,rather than a celebrity and I'm only sorry that I don't have more time to give'.

In May, Tom was one of the 2000 people in Trafalgar Square for the AIDS memorial vigil.

'I thought that that went quite well,but I resented the way we behaved like performing seals for the television crews only to find out they never used the film'

Afterwards, most of the people at the vigil went off to a party a at Heaven, but Tom was one of the handful in the Square that responded to a request from demonstrators outside South Africa House to add strength to their anti-apartheid ticket.

The AIDS crisis concerns him as much as any of us.

'SPLASH'(PHOTOGRAPHED
BROADSTAIRS 1985 BY
PHIL BOULTON (COPYRIGHT)

Below deep blue eyes
Your cheeks
Lifted into tight balls
Your small distinct nose
Your sensitive lips packed with
energy
Your brown tauric neck
With shadows of thick hair
The slight protruding larynx
Between strong sternocleidomastoidei

Your deliciously parted lips
Uncover shining white teeth
Sending me a smile
Approaching for a kiss
Knowing my mouth
Canting secret Pools
Of personality
Showering me with roguish love.

Your brilliant consciousness
Floating into mine
Your essential vibe
Hitting me in unexpected moments
Expanding my perception
Defining my being
Into intenser forms
Fusing cosciousness
Into new realities
Creating fertile climates
Gyres which we travel
Onjuicy pot-like states of mind
Recognising each other and
ourselves
Through fragrant mists of body
energies
Our soft eyes endlessly reflecting
Depths of our beings.

Come!
Let's go for a holiday
Just you and I
The sea and the sun

We'll go to the Algarve
Swim, run, wrestle, caress,
Make love on deserted beaches
Under vast open skies

Kiss

Leaning against cliff walls
Tongue playing with tongue
Saliva oceans in secret surfs

Lie close in cool caves
The water icy
The air hot
The sun penetrating our bones

Hike among shrubs and rocks
Touch shoulder to shoulder
arm to arm
Feel the thrill and magic
Of our fused spirit

I want to see your eyes
Wild cat-like
Piercing mine

I want to see
Your biceps hard egg-like
Suddenly contract
Under black-brown scaling skin'

I want to see
Your bristling temple curls
Your premature
Baldness

I want to feel
The terrible presence
Of your powerful depression
Pumped with energy

Lashing, biting and hissing
Like a magnificent snake
Tamed and applied
For (Y)our purpose

Ralph Berlin
Copenhagen 1986.

(TOM ROBINSON INTERVIEW CONT.)

ANTIBODY TEST

'I have found out my own antibody status and I'm glad Ihave', says Tom.' I have had a couple of tests because I wanted to, not because I was pressuried and I have found it worthwhile.

'Whatever the result it is liable to make people more careful.' I now practice safer sex and think that many gay men are now doing so.

'It is', he says, 'some time since I have used the scene. It still, to me at least, seems to be the same old meat market it always was. When I was younger and prettier it was easier to talk to people, now I'm not so sure'.

I'm not sure how much he really means that but before I get the chance to persue it he has gone on to talk about his most recent visit to Heaven.

'During the summer I did a High Energy night there and was very much second best to the likes of Bucks Fizz. But give me a two hour gig in a hot and steamy rock club and I would probably come off better!.

Second best is, he believes, the way the organisers of benefits see him.

'If they can't get the Communards then they come looking for me. I like benefits because you can play your four best songs, have a good time and still feel you are doing something worthwhile'.

At present, the man the media dubbed 'The angry young man of rock' is in popular demand.

Throughout his career he has had many ups and downs with his best songs coming out of some personal heartbreak or torment. If 'Still Loving You', his latest album, is anything to go by then Tom Robinson has had an emotional battering in recent years,

It is not only his music which has made him one of our modern folk heroes. It is the way that through his music and his way of life he has helped us all to feel proud. On that, he says, he hasn't changed.

'I have always believed in the right of two people to be lovers and to be as close as they want. I continue to believe that and will always fight for that. Some things might change but this has not'.

Interview by Stephen Burn.
Reproduced from CAPITAL GAY
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McKerrow,Acting Editor.

The Long Road Part One

ILLUSTRATION: ANNA DE HOLT ELSTUB

RUSSELL STONE

LEAMINGTON SPA

MARCH 26TH 1986

I tried it again, this business of going home, and I foolishly, thought it would be different. The ice, however, remained frozen. My Aunty was still quoting me the Oedipus complex across the dinner table and her friend was having a good old titter about some 'puffs' who'd been throwing a party.

'And you know, it's not allowed is it, to have more than two of them together?'

My Grandma, as usual, was uncomprehending.

'Well it's against the law, isn't it? It can only be two together in private.'

I hardly knew where to begin.

'And I mean, sometimes they leave the curtains open and you can see them kissing. Well, it's none of my business what people get up to in their own homes, but what if the kids saw them?'

And I wondered, well what if the kids *did* see them? See who? See *them*. You know, *them*. *That* sort of person. Doing the sort of thing *that* sort of person does.

And my Aunty said to me, 'One day you'll change your mind. Because I don't believe you *are* homosexual. I think you're *bisexual*, and as such it's *only* going to take the right amount of pressure on the scales to tip the balance in the right direction.'

The right direction. My stomach was in knots. What you mean the direction I've never been in?

The worst of it is that it was me who had introduced her to the word bisexual. She had been sniffing around me for weeks because I'd had my (left) ear pierced, and she thought I was 'suspect'. She kept quoting me the example of my cousin whose earring and (gasp) beard made her feel sure *he* must have had some homosexual experience in his life. So what about me? Why did I have *my* ear pierced? What was I hiding?

I wasn't hiding anything, so I told her. I had my ear pierced to mark the occassion of my 'coming out. My Aunty nodded sagely, as though somehow her prejudice had been confirmed. This was more than a year ago. More than a year later her prejudice remains the same.

My Aunty would feel vindicated by my 'obsession' with this particular prejudice of hers. She would see in this piece of writing mere confirmation of what she sees as my 'maladjustment'.

'If you are happy with your sexuality, why do you need to sound off about it to me?'

The problem with my Aunty's philosophy is that it is infinitely malleable. The more I kick against it the more sheaallows me to kick against it. The angrier I become, that she is attempting to deny me my sexuality, the broader her smile at what she sees as my 'paranoia'. And yet, for all her denial, she tells me that in many ways I am the typical homosexual- full of fear and mistrust. My paranoia, she tells me, is a symptom of my homosexuality, because homosexuality is a negative thing and a non-productive thing. She knows this she tells me, because she's read enough about it in books.

In the end I just can't win. So I bottle up my anger and frustration and I carry on the fight elsewhere, where at least I have my comrades who are ready to fight alongside me. Of course, my Aunty doesn't believe my comrades exist either. She says she knows the kind of people I'm getting involved with, and that I'll turn round one day and wonder why I ever put my faith in them.

And on that day I'll embrace the family once again.

What she fails to realise, of course, is that I am the type of person my parents always warned me about. It is my kowledge of that that keeps me going. It is altogether that knowledge, that allows me to see through the lies and distortion about homosexuality that have been fed to me all these years, and that only now am I beginning to have the courage to challenge.

To put myself in perspective. I am a twenty-two year old graduate wh 'came out' as bisexual in the first term of my final year at University.UUp until that moment I had been almost totally bewildered by what my feelings were telling me. I was a classic case. I had known for all these years that my sexuality wasn't what people were telling me, and yet I had known almost without knowing. The moment I articulated what I really felt, it was as thought half my history had hit me sideways on.

A friend of mine had been the catalyst. He told me he was gay the first drink I had with him on my return from a year away in America. Knowledge of the fact left me bewildered for days. No-one had ever told me they were gay. I had never known anyone who was gay. And all that I had ever heard about homosexuality was to do with Jeremy Thorpe and 'biting the pillow', or the drag artist who live on the next street, or the games teacher who whistled while we had our shower, or the sort of man you were supposed to watch out for at the school gates, or in short, nothing loving and nothing that was not sordid.

Curiously when my friend told me he was gay my thoughts didn't suddenly splinter into all these individual examples - rather they seemed to spiral suddenly down a great hole, as though a plug in my mind had just been pulled. Everything, all the old associations and the hoary old myths about homosexuality were sucked into this gravity whirlpool and then drained of all substance.

What I only realised later was that when my friend told me he was gay I instinctively ducked the attention that was suddenly focussed on me and my own sexuality. I was asked point blank if I was gay and said no. But the questions didn't stop there. My own questions, questions that I had never even dared ask myself which had suddenly become the most important questions I was asking myself.

I lay in my bed at night and struggled with my past history. Make sense, I began to say, make sense of all those fantasies you've always had about friends of the same sex. Make sense, I said of this woman here wh drives you c crazy, or this man there who you fantasise about, but wuld never dare think futher about, and for what reason? Account for this friend of yours who is gay and who is still a person in spite of all they've told you, and account for all that crap, those preconceptions that have just gone out of the window. Account for all the men you fancy even at the same moment as you say you're not gay. Account for all this and then make sense of your feelings.

A matter of weeks later I came out as bisexual. And after all that, it was only to be the start of the argument.

(..........TO BE CONTINUED)

'...MANS DEARST POSSESSION IS LIFE; AND SINC IT IS GIVEN TO HIM TO LIVE BUT ONCE, HE MUST SO LIVE AS TO FEEL NO TORTURINC REGRETS FOR YEARS WITHOUT PURPOSE; SO LIVE AS NOT TO BE SEARED WITH THE SHAME OF A COWARDLY OR TRIVIAL PAST; SO LIVE THAT, DYING, HE CAN SAY: ALL MY LIFE AND ALL MY STRENGTH WAS GIVEN TO THE FINEST CAUSE IN THE WORLD - THE LIBERATION OF MANKIND.'

V.I. LENIN.

'THE LOVER SHOWETH HOW HE IS FORASAKEN OF SUCH AS HE SOMETIME ENJOYED'

They flee from me, that somtime did me seke
With naked fote stalkying within my chamber.
Once have I seen them gentle, tame, and meke,
That now are wild, and do not once remember
That sometyme they have put themselves in danger,
To take bread at my hand, and now they range,
Busily sekying in continuall change.

Thanked be fortune, it hath been otherwise
Twenty tymes better: but once especiall,
In thinne array, after a pleasant gyse,
When her loose gowne did from her shoulders fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,
And therewithall, so swetely did me kisse,
And softly sayd: Deare hart, how like you this?

It was no dreame: for I am broade awakying.
But it is all turnde now through my gentlenesse,
Into a bitter fashion of forsakying:
And I have leave to go of her goodnesse,
And she also to use newfanglenesse.
But, sins that I unkyndly so am served:
How like you this, what hath she now deserved ?

Sir Benjamin Wyatt.

Androgyny

Intwo recent articles, Rachel O'Connor has been arguing that androgyny is an important concept, for the individual, and has urged that an androgynous society would be a highly desirable aim for the future.(She is not the only person to say this, and the idead has been floating around for some time now). But in some recent writing I have been doing,(JOHN ROWAN: THE HORNED GOD:FEMINISM AND MEN AS WOUNDING AND HEALING * ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL) I have had to come face to face with some with some very convincing (to me) objections to this idea, and it seems worth sharing these doubts.

It seems to me that because of the prevalence of patriarchy,and because of its all-pervading influence (even extending into areas like Tarot and the astrologers) we really have no idea of what males are like under under all the conditioning,or females either. Over the past few years, feminists have been struggling and wrestling with language and culture to try and discover what a female might be.Some of the bravest and most exciting efforts in this direction being by Mary Daly. And it is worth noticing that in her exciting book GYN/ECOLOGY he says

'Experience proved that this wor word (androgyny) which we now recognise as expressing pseudo-wholeness in its combination of distorted gender descriptions, failed and betrated our thought'.

This is the Key to understanding why the usual idea of androgyny won't do.It is an attempt to repair the distortions of one patriarchal position by using material from the opposite distortion of another. It t ies to eliminate the gender stereotyping of human virtues, but it is itself formulated in terms of those very concepts of masculinity and femininity which i it ultimately rejects.

Also,as Gloria Steinem once pointed out, androgyny has a nasty habit of tilting towards the male, because in our society the male virtues are so much more familiar and acceptable than what we are now stumblingly beginning to accept as the female virtues(I don't mean femininity)

In all these ways androgyny seems much more suspect than O'Connor seems to realize. And even if androgyny could overcome all these defects, there is still something very illusory about it. Naomi Coldenberg, in her discussion of this, says that the androgyne tends to be a Utopian symbol, always to do with some distant future state,always at the end of things. It always retains, she says, 'an unrealistic,otherworldly quality'. It may be useful in opening up alternative ways of thinking, but ultimately it is a dead end. In the O'Connor articles she herself uses the phrase 'utopian ideals' in relation to her notion of the androgynous society.

So what can we put in place of androgyny? I suggest the idea of polarities. If we stretch a string between our two hands, and someone plucks it, it produces a musical note. If the string is too slack, no note arises; if it is too tight, it snaps, and again no note can be heard, no music can be made.

If the two hands represent the male and female poles of experience, thenwe have an interesting analogy. If the male and female poles are too close togather, this could be an attempt at androgyny, and no positive outcome would result. O'Connor sees this, and suggests as an antedote that ' sexual role playing would still happen', so we are not so far apart here. Similarily, if the male and female poles get too far apart, and the string snaps, this could be the situation where the men retire into their space, and women into theirs, and again no music results (Temporarily it may make more sense for women to seperate, in order to work out things which the they cannot work out so well in the presence of men, but we are talking here about more long term questions)

But if we pull the male and female poles far enough apart for each of them to differentiate and work out their full essence, without losing touch with each other, then some creative outcome can result.

It is important to point out that it is true within each person as well as between people and between groups of people. The contrasexual archetypes within each person also work in this way. Each man can get in touch with the female inside himself , and each woman can contact the male within. Each can own up to that opposition that inner polarity, and work it through. Difference, as Audre Lord has said,is;

'a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic,...Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal,, can the power to seek new ways to actively 'be' in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act in the world where there are no charters... Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged.'

So what does that actually mean in terms of the female relation to male and male to female?It means that men have to become much more aware of how different we are, and how heavy that can seem to women, and how problematical it is to be a man, whether gay or straight, or bisexual. No longer can we yake it for granted that we know what it is to be a man. We have to open our eyes to our own nature and conditioning, we just have to wake up from our semi-hypnotic state.

Obviously there is far more to be said about all this, and I have tried to explore the implications at greater length and depth in my book ' The Horned God: Feminism an and men as wounding and healing', which is coming out from Routledge and Kegan Paul shortly. The last sentence of that book reads;

' Together we can be consciously aware of the social processes which are about to bring patriarchy to an end, and we can take a more active part in hastening that end'.

I believe that is what it is all about, and I hope this is what O'Connor wants too.

John Rowan
26 September 1986.

LESBIAN NEWS BI-MONTHLY
CONTACT
MAGAZINE
11A FORTH STREET, EDINBURGH
£4.50 per year

REICH FOR BEGINNERS * DAVID ZANE MAIROWITZ * ILLUSTRATED BY GERMAN GONZALES

Wilhelm Reich has been dismissed as a lunatic. His early works were burned by the Nazis and his later ones incinerated by the F.B.I.

In the 1960s he was hailed as t the prophet of the sexual revolution. Now in the 80s he is the subject of a revival, even thoug though the original versions of his best books have never been translated into English.

Reich was an assistant to Sigmund Freud in Vienna in the 1920s but soon began to develop his own theories. In his first book,'The Function of the Orgasm', Reich sa saw the perfect orgasm as essetial, as a means of releasing energy and tension.

All of us construct 'character armour' to protect ourselves from our own desires and instincts. Thus we block ourselves off from orgasmic release and multiply our own neuroses.

Reich's work soon became politiacal rather than purely psychoanalytical. He saw the way in which authoritarian societies use the family to indoctrinate children with the submissiveness which goes hand in hand with sexual repression.

Stifled in Vienna, Reich visited the Soviet Union only to be disappointed with Stalin's undoing of original pro-women,pro-gay and pro-children Soviet legislation.

In the 1930s, this socialist sexologist was in Berlin, setting up sexual advice centres for for working class people, producing books and pamphlets, and uniting more than 80 sex-political groups into one organisation, under the umbrella of the Communist Party (KPD).

Their demands included better housing, abolition of laws against abortion, homosexuality and sex education. They also worked for free contraception, health protection for mother and children, nurseries in factories and work places, and home leave for prisoners.

Reich abhorred toilet training, the beating of children and any interference in infantile sexuality or masturbation. He wrote a pamphlet,'The Sexual Struggle of Youth', giving concrete advice on masturbation,orgasm and birth control. It claimed sexual satisfaction as a primary aim of socialism.

The pamphlet was suppressed by horrified members of the KPD. Reich wanted the Party to be attractive to young people, giving them opportunities to meet each other and even provide safe places to have sex. But his efforts came to nothing. The Nazis were doing it better.

For the German people,'Hitler stirred the deepest roots of thei their emotional being', thought Reich. And after fleeing from tn the Nazis in 1933, he wrote perha perhaps his most important work, 'The Mass Psychology of Fascism'.

This marked the end of his political activity. Wandéring through Europe he did 'bio-research' into breathing techniques and muscle use, hoping to lead his psychoanalysis patients to the unrestricted orgasm. But his work was controversial, and he was hou hounded out of Denmark, Sweden, Austria and Norway.

In the U.S.A.,in the 40s and 50 50s,his work became more and more crazy as he sought the key to the universe. And even though he was by now virulently anti-communist, he was the victim of a McCarthyite witch-hunt. Reich died in 1957.

Mairowitz's book is an immensely readable account of Reich's life and work. Cozales' excellent comic-strip drawings are backed u up with photo-montage and reprint reprints of drawings by Grosz. Clear, concise and amusing,the comic-book style resume is by no means uncritical but ends on a sobering note.

While Reich is dismissed as a lunatic, left-wing parties remain remote from peoples' daily lives, well-fed psychoanalists turn 'cured' neurotics out into the streets, and the 'sane' scientists are engaged in nuclear Armageddon.

(NOTE: For in-depth analysis, Mairowitz recommends 'the first really important Reich biography, 'Fury On Earth' by Myron Sharof)

A 'Writers and Readers' documentary comic book in association with Unwin Paperbacks 174pp £3.95

What a Man's Gotta Do
Antony Easthope
PALADIN £3.95

A very up to date view of male sexuality, as the Bibliography only includes very recent titles. Antony Easthope uses his literary skill to great effect in this collection of essays. Each heading has very direct meaning, with studies of Tv programmes, Pop song lyrics and cigarette advertising used as examples of the definition of masculinity. The underlying arguments relate to the Freudean Psychoanalytical model which speaks well of the Bisexual component of male sexuality.

The customary attack on our Patriachal society and the oppression of women is made, but most of the book seems to be taken up with men's interest in other men. This is the main message of the book, men seem to be more interested in their own kind, rather than women, posing the question, "Real men are homosexual?".

One of the great things in this book are the refreshingly clear accounts of the male sexual identity done in only three paragraphs. Sadly, the use of recent culture; Dynasty, Song lyrics etc will date this book quickly. Antony Easthope says the definitions of masculinity are maintained by popular culture and shows this in the book. He dwells too long on this observation and gives little space for a possible post-patriachal male identity. We will have to wait until the year 2411 to see the changes, really?

He could have preached an ideology of change, but instead just leaves the reader to make up his own mind if change is necessary.

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STAGE & SCREEN

ROSA LUXEMBOURG

Margaret von Trottas new film deals with the life of Rosa Luxembourg, a german revolutionary. Luxembourg was active at the beginning of this century, roughly at the same time as the american John Reed, filmed in Warren Beatty's 'Reds'.

And oh! how a touch of Hollywood would have improved this film.At least in Tinseltown the wooden dialogue('You are Karl Liebknecht, founder member of the Social Democratic Party) would not have been tolerated..

Films such as 'Reds' have shown that politicalsubjects can appear exciting on the screen.Rosa Luxembourg dashes that hope.Even friends of mine in the Socialist Worker Party have complained that it is boring.

This is very frustrating.The film had the chance to deal with some fascinating problems - the debate on whether the revolution can have links with parliamentary democracy, the problem of mixing emotional with political relationships.Above all, how can a film communicate history without us feeling lectured at.

Clearly there are too few films about modern revolutionaries, or revolutionary women at that,so this film must be supported.But come back Warren Beatty,all is forgiven.

DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE
(Denys Arcand,Canada 1986)

This French Canadian film shows four men and four women discussing sex over one day in the country.It strips away their respectability to examine a 'reality' of people obsessed with gay cruising,sadomasochism and bondage.

The film is an extremely witty and stylish attempt to show that we have become a decadent culture, obsessed withsexual fulfilment at the expense of a rotting economy & national morale.NUclear doom beckons on the horizon, while we busily perfect our minds and bodies for the multiple orgasm.

This premise is crass, in the same way that 'Looking FOr Mr. Goodbar',which was Hollywood's attempt to condemn what it saw as a contemporary excess of promiscuity,was crass.

This sort of film beguiles with its sparklingly cynical dialogue, and exquisite photography, but really it insults men and women. By recreating the world of 'a bit on the side' and nudge nudge anecdotes about orgy parties,it perpetuates meaningless stereotypes.In short, insidiously evil entertainment which oppresses us all.

MAURICE

Merchant-Ivory films have nearly completed the shoot on 'Maurice,from E M Forster's novel.

This book,published after Forsters death,has an openly gay theme. A young man attempts to conform to the values of the Edwardian period and his class by marriage,but come comes to the painful realisation that he is a homosexual.

Merchant-Ivory, in using the script-writing talents of Anglo-Indian novelist Ruth Prawer Jabvala, have come to increasing recognition. This follows their adaptation of Henry James' 'The Europeans' and E M Forsters 'Room With a View'.This latter film has just gone on general release after several months of sell-out screenings at the Curzon, Mayfair.

ILLUSTRATION: SATIRIC DANCER (1926 BY ANDRE KERTESZ , COURTESY EDITIONS A. GAILLARD-F. NUGERON.

PRICK UP YOUR EARS

Alan Bennett has written the script for Stephen Frears current project.PRICK UP YOUR EARS is a biopic of the life of the outrageous gay playwright Joe Orton, whose memoirs were recently serialised in Gay Times.

Stephen Frears came to fame with MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE, a triumph of gay film-making.

It will be fascinating to see how Frears adapts Orton's X-rated antics for general viewing.

By coincidence,Joe Ortons personal drama was played out only in a tiny bedsit only a few hundred yards from the Fallen Angel, where London Bisexual Group currently meets.

London's Gay Community Bookshop
Gay's The Word
66 Marchmont Sreet WC1
Telephone: 01-278 7654

Bust by Gregory Day
Tabard Theatre Turnham Green

This play reminds us that there is a war going on. A war between women and men. The central character Lesley, finds a future UK torn appart with a confrontation between the sexes. Feminist separatist terrorists, members of BUST wander the streets fighting the Patriachal society with tanks and guns. Lesley is mistaken for a woman, raped by a gang of men and reluctantly drawn into the feminst camp.At one point our hero/heroine has an oppurtunity to avenge the rape, but forgives the rapist.

Dressed and accepted as a woman we see how this role can have advantages in the seedy society of strip joints. We see how admirer Errol and strip joint manager can be manipulated. Eventually this society is broken apart by a raid by BUST and a relationship develops between straight Errol and Lesley. In an effort to reach Lesley , Errol resorts to dressing as a woman to enter the forbidden world of the Lesbian clubs.

What is surprising about this play is that the central character is the all American boy hero who just happens to be drawn into this British struggle. This ploy of course may be to give obvious commercial possibilities. I suppose as viewed from the States, Britian might seem a land of gender confusion.

A good thing about this play to me is how it makes its statements without too much reference to Gay politics. It is all too easy to get drawn into the notion that to fight a sex war is the priviledge of gay politics.

LETTERS

Dear People,
I have just returned from the Fourth National Conference on Bisexuality: You asked for comments in Bi-Monthly, so here goes.

To me it was a very good conference in that I found the general atmosphere so friendly, it was much more easy to talk to people than I expected. The women-only massage workshop was particularly special to me.

What I want to write about most is the ideas I had at the very end of the conference all about proposals (modest?) for the next one. I mentioned these briefly at the closing plenary.

I would entitle this future conference 'Bisexuals and Society'. For the idea about the opening session I am indebted to Peter. His suggestion was that everyone would bring along a piece of music that they felt would introduce the them to the group, or that was very special for that individual, five minutes being allocated per person. I think this should be extended to any work of art, whether painting, sculpture, music or whatever feels appropriate.

Workshop sessions would be on:-

1) Differently-abled bisexuals
2) Bisexuals and race
3) Bisexuals and class
4) Bisexuals and religion
5) Bisexuals and patriachy
6) Bisexuals and homosexuality
7) Bisexuals and heterosexuality
8) Bisexuals and food
9) Bisexuals and capitalism
10) Bisexuals and socialism

You get the idea! The order of these workshops is random at the moment, suggestions for other sessions are invited. I don't know if many people would be interested in this event, it seems very impersonal so far. We'd have lots of massage and dance and other non-verbal events too, to refresh us all. And wholefood catering, in a fully accessible venue with escort escorts, signers, interpreters creche and other facilities as required.

These would take a lot of advance organisation to ensure ap appropriate provision. I hope there would be flexibility too, in activities and the order in which they happened. I do not want a hierarchial fully organised conference run by a few people only. Personal space was very important at the last conference, so this one should have quiet rooms: women only, men only and mixed seems right to me.

This is all dreaming of course, does anyone share this vision? If so perhaps together we would tackle the enormous amount of work involved to make it happen. Do get in touch if you would like to make this a reality.

Love,
Alison

please write c/ The Editor, Bi-Mon

Dear Editor,
I am writing to protest at the prejudices displayed in P.Gatter's letter in your last issue, and worse still, his adoption of the phraseology of the notoriously homophobic A.N.Wilson.

He is evidently more intimately acquainted with Anglo-Catholic clergy than I, who tend to know more about the Chief Rabbi, about whom he would need to worry less. However, it seems absurd to blame the two thousand year old misogyny of the Christian Church on such a small present day group.

I know that some of your readers are upset at the rejection of bisexuals by many gay people. You need look for no further reasons than such prejudiced attitudes being displayed in your mag.

Yours sincerely,
Max

THREE IS NOT A CROWD

AS a recent subscriber to your magazine we are very disappointed to find their are not articles or comments with regard to concurrent sexual relationships. The emphasis is on consecutive relationships an and you seem to cater for the homosexual (male or female) who occassionally courts a member of the opposite sex or a heterosexual who occasionally courts a member of his or her own sex. What of the heterosexual couple who wish to court a third number to achieve a bisexual friendship and/or relationship.

I believe there are many couples (of which we are one) who seek that objective but as it was with gays seeking friends 'within the closet' so it is now with couples seeking single friends.

Is it that single people only seek other single people? Everyone wants to find their soul-mate - why not meet a couple while looking? At the worst you will make new friends, at the best you may find two soul-mates at the same time. For us there must be a number of bisexual girls out there who, for one reason or another, would enjoy our company.

If so please contact Nicki on 01-794-2897.

(N.B. I wrote to Jean Rook, columnist of the Daily Express) to complain about her coverage of the death from AIDS of the Prince of Wales' valet)

DAILY EXPRESS
121 FLEET ST.
LONDON EC4

Dear Mr. Brooks,
Thank you for your letter.

I always think before I write. I think that unless AIDS is to spread throughout the country killing all young people, we must stop glamourising, publicising its so called virtues and generally makiing it into a fashionable thing to be. I do not, and have never, condemned homosexuals. I do condemn the glamourising of their way of life, which is causing death to the young.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Rook
Assistant Editor

We welcome your comments on all aspects of bisexuality and other topics. Please keep your letters short and address them to The Editor, BI-MONTHLY, Box BM-BI, London WC1N 3XX. enclosing your telephone number (not for publication). We would also love to recieve any other contributions - features, first - person, illustrations, news stories, offers of help, offers of money !

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London Bisexual Group

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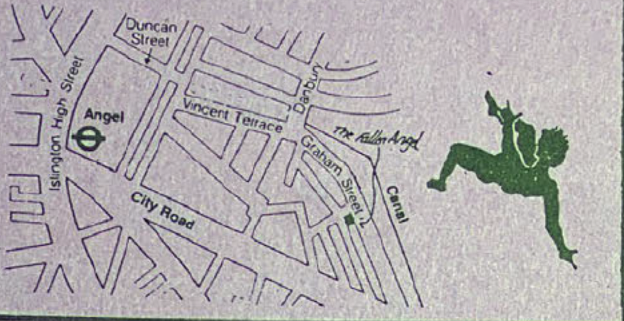
The London Bisexual Group meets every Monday at a friendly and pleasant pub in Islington. Here you can enjoy a delicious small meal or sample their choice of local beers before joining us for one of our informal get-togethers or a lively discussion. Hundreds of men and women have done so in the last few years. Why don't you come and make some new friends. You'll be surprised.

THE FALLEN ANGEL
HOW TO GET THERE



Meetings start at 8.30pm. For further information write to BM BI London WC1N 3XX.

You never know until you've tried it. LBG.

JANUARY
- 5 Workshop on Safer Sex - David Rahdal from the Terence Higgins Trust.
- 12 Massage; 'Head, hands and Feet' + Rebirthing follow-up - Guy.
- 19 N.U.S. and the Bisexual Ban - Warwick University Gay Group.
- 26 Sandra Alexander - Sex therapist & Prestel Agony Aunt.

February
- 2 Peadophilia & The Politics of Childhood.
- 9 Direction of the Bi-Group - General Discussion & Open Forum.
- 16 Anne Johnson - Co-ordinator, Partners Study, Middlesex Hospital - Aids & Bisexuality.
- 23 Bisexuality & Fantasy - Rachel O'Connor.

March
- 2 Paul Howlen - Joys and Pitfalls of Coming Out to Friends and Colleagues.
- 9 Social - All Welcome.
- 16 History of the London Bisexual Group.
- 23 Bisexuals and the Media.

NOTE: WHILE THE TALKS AND DISCUSSIONS ARE TAKING PLACE IN THE MAIN UPSTAIRS ROOM, THERE WILL BE A PERSONAL GROUP, LED BY AN EXPERIENCED COUNSELLOR, IN THE ADJACENT ROOM, AT WHICH ALL WILL BE WELCOME , PARTICULARILY NEWCOMERS.

Lesbian and Gay Green Group

The L & G Green Group say they provide an alternative to the two main options, which exist for Lesbian and Gay people, ie an alternative to the commercial scene and conventional left wing politics.

The group also aims to act as a lobby within the Green Movement, which it accuses of 'naivety concerning the needs of Lesbians and Gay men'.

They also want to encourage Green Politics and consciousness within Lesbian and Gay circles, and to provide support to those who are committed to combating the present consumerist way of life.

One simple aim is to act as a social centre and contact group for like minded Green Gays and Lesbians.

WHAT DOES GREEN MEAN?

'Green' is a self-adopted label useful for the identification with a set of principles and ideas, that cover a wide range of issues. These ideas question the very foundations of our society, and see the present system as being the cause of all our problems, environmental and human. For Greens, human and environmental issues are inseperable.

The roots of the Green Movement are strongly holistic, recognising a need for harmony between all creatures, the Earth, the inner self, the outer body, action and passivity.

Areas which Greens are involved in include the Inner Growth movement, Meditation and Yoga, Alternative Energy, Self Sufficiency, Health Foods, Animal Rights, Veganism, Ecology.

Green is not a set of immovable dogmas, but certain things are basic, such as standing against exploitation, oppression and violence.

The L & G Green Group produces a magazine (New Leaf) and has an aims sheet, which will let you know the issues at any one time the majority of the group will support. Meetings are held at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, 67-69 Cowcross St, London EC1. Information can be obtained by writing to L & G Green Group, 35 Ferndale Road, South Tottenham, London N15 6UF, or there's a more personal way of contacting the group, by phoning,

for women: Becky 249 4375
for men: Lee 809 2463

COMMENT: *In their literature the L & G Green Group doesn't mention the word 'bisexual'. Reading the 'Group Aims', I see a glaring ommission in the 'main areas of exploitation and oppression', that is the oppression of young people/children.*

Symposium 87
Writers Conference

There are only one hundred places at this conference, being held during the Easter weekend of 1987, in London. The registration fee of £25 includes a party and three days of lunch, tea and coffee. If you want to meet the famous and the talented (the two don't always go together), and discuss the burning issues of lesbian and gay writers, then write for further details from:

Peter Robins 01-735 4246
Martin Foreman 01 981 4275